



Aerospace Engineer



Laura Iseler
**Aerospace Engineer/
Communications Specialist**

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I provide information about what the rotorcraft division does to the public through newspaper and magazine articles, television spots, air show booths and so on. I educate kids of all ages about the special capabilities of helicopters and how NASA is working to improve them further. I also propose and justify rotorcraft research to NASA headquarters.

Areas of expertise:

- Control theory
- Design & testing
- Safety
- Communications

How I first became interested in this profession:

I've always been fascinated by flying machines, especially those that were a bit unconventional. I always hoped to go into aeronautics but pursued a degree in mechanical engineering thinking it was more practical. When I toured Stanford as a possible graduate school, my assigned advisor arranged a tour of NASA as well, which introduced me to the wonderful world of helicopters, and I never looked back.

What helped prepare me for this job:

My engineering education and my internships helped me to become an engineer. My experience as an aerospace engineer helped me to become a communications specialist for rotorcraft.

My role models or inspirations:

My dad was a big inspiration. He helped me build a wind tunnel in the 8th grade and seemed to know everything about everything. I also loved cool pictures of funky flying vehicles in scientific magazines, especially the SR-71 Blackbird and all the neat stuff that NASA researchers worked on.

My education and training:

- Bachelor of Arts in Engineering Science & Bachelor of Engineering at Dartmouth College
- Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering at Stanford University

My career path:

Two summers as intern at Aerospatiale Advanced Projects in Toulouse, France
Fifteen months as a design engineer of automotive clusters at Ford Automotive in Dearborn, MI

Thirteen years as an aerospace engineer in the Rotorcraft Division, NASA Ames Research Center

One year as a manager of the Safe All-Weather Flight Operations for Rotorcraft (SAFOR) - NASA Ames

One year as a communications specialist - Rotorcraft Division, NASA Ames Research Center

What I like about my job:

I like that I still use my engineering background to share with school kids and the public my fascination and respect for helicopters and all the good things they can accomplish. I like that I get to explain all the neat helicopter research to people and get them interested.

What I don't like about my job:

There are so many things I need to do, that sometimes it's hard to know where to begin and how to figure out what is most important. There are lots of small things that take lots of time and patience to complete.

My advice to anyone interested in this occupation:

Watch the Discovery Channel. Learn how things work. Question people you meet about their jobs. If you think you might want to go into science or engineering, do so and study hard.

Additional Resources:

- American Institute of Biological Sciences
<http://www.aibs.org>
- American Physiological Society
<http://www.faseb.org/aps>
- American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
<http://www.biophysics.org/biophys/society/biohome.htm>
- American Society for Microbiology
<http://www.asmsusa.org>
- Astrobiology Summer Academy
<http://academy.arc.nasa.gov/>
- Biotechnology Industry Organization
<http://www.bio.org/welcome.html>
- Graduate Student Researchers Program
<http://spacelink.nasa.gov/Instructional.Materials/NASA.Educational.Products/Graduate.Student.Researchers.Program.Brochure/.index.html>
- MATHCOUNTS Competition
<http://mathcounts.org/>
- Minority University Research and Education Programs
<http://mured.nasaprs.com/>
- NASA Cooperative Education Program for college students
<http://spacelink.nasa.gov/Educational.Services/NASA.Education.Programs/Student.Support/NASA.Cooperative.Education.Program/.index.html>
- NASA Jobs
<http://nasajobs.nasa.gov/>
- NASA Office of Life and Microgravity Sciences and Applications
<http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/olmsa/>
- NASA SHARP Internship Program for high-schoolers
<http://www.mtsibase.com/sharp/>
- NASA Student Employment
http://nasajobs.nasa.gov/stud_opps/employment/index.htm
- NASA Student Involvement Program student contests
<http://www.nsip.net/index.cfm>
- Order NASA career videos such as "Engineers: Turning Ideas into Reality," "Careers: Aerospace Engineer" or "Reaching for the Stars" from NASA CORE.
<http://core.nasa.gov>
- Student's Guide to Astrobiology
<http://www.astrobiology.com/student.html>
- Tech-Interns.com
<http://www.tech-interns.com/>

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Thank you.

